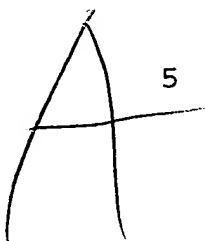


Claims 1-4, which were being prosecuted, have been cancelled and new claims 11-22 are substituted therefor. These claims have been drawn in a manner to satisfy 35 U.S.C. §112.

Applicants' invention, as set forth in claim 11, relates to a sports ball having a hollow spherically shaped inflatable tube. There is a covering layer comprising a rubber pouch that covers the inflatable tube. A reinforced layer is adhered on the surface of the covering layer with a solution of an adhesive agent. In the sports ball of the invention, the covering layer is made of a material which does not permit the solution of the adhesive agent used to attach the reinforced layer to the covering layer to pass through the covering layer. This prevents adhesion between the tube and the covering layer due to the adhesive agent. A lubricant is provided between the tube and the covering layer. Therefore, the tube is spaced from the covering layer. In a preferred embodiment, an outer layer is formed on the surface of the reinforced layer.

Original claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over Takazawa. The ball of Takazawa does not have a layer corresponding to the covering layer of this invention. Takazawa has a tube (1) and a first layer consisting of cloth strips (3). The Examiner's contention that the first layer of cloth strips shown in Takazawa corresponds to the claimed covering layer of the present invention is incorrect. In the ball of Takazawa, to prevent adhesion between the tube and the first layer of the cloth strips would require complex production steps such as:



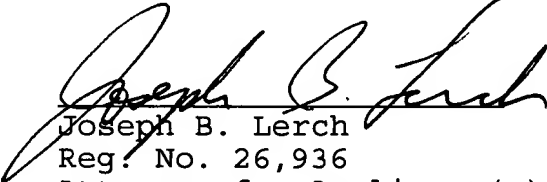
forming an empty globe consisting of brittle material; attaching cloth strips on the surface of the globe to form a pouch of the first layer; removing the globe from the pouch; and inserting the tube into the pouch. Hence, in the ball of Takazawa, production efficiency is low and the ball is expensive in comparison with that of the present invention.

New claims 11-22 clearly define a novel and advantageous product that is not shown or suggested in Takazawa. The novel ball of the invention is relatively simple to produce and has enhanced characteristics for both playing and wear. Therefore, the claims should be allowable.

The other art cited by the Examiner has been considered and is not deemed to be pertinent.

Prompt and favorable action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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